

# NAGEELA SHABBOS

Have-a

Shemos 5781  
January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

SEASON 5 EPISODE 12

a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



## Bushy Vision

by Rabbi Dani Locker

I predict that you're going to read this week's episode of Nageela Shabbos. At least you'll start to read it. In fact, I can prove to you that you're going to read it, by the fact that you're reading this now. So obviously I was right. Right? Am I the only one who gets confused by me? Nah. I didn't think so.

Clearly, I can't prove something to you with something that only happens after the prediction comes true. "Hey, buy this invention I made! You can trust it will work right, because when you bring it home and turn it on, and it works, then you'll know you were right to buy it!" Okay... and what if it doesn't work, then what will I know? This is part of a question that bothers me regarding this week's Torah portion. When God

appears to  
Moses in  
the form

of a flaming thornbush, he provides a bunch of signs and proofs to show the Jewish people. His hand gets bleached, his snake gets stuck; er, I mean his stick gets snaked. He turns water to blood. Additionally, God says, "This is the sign that I have sent you. You will serve God on this very mountain." Give it a minute to let that sink in. God is telling Moses, if you want to know if you and the Jewish people can believe that I am sending you, I will prove it to you, because after you're done with your mission and the Jews are free, you'll bring them to this mountain to worship. Let's do the math. If Moses believes God (and believes that this bushy vision was actually a message from God and not just hallucination brought on by



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San Diego	4:41
Irvine	4:42
Los Angeles	4:43
Oakland	4:49
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Scottsdale	5:18

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drinking too much, um, pickle juice), this should not be necessary. If Moses doesn't believe God, then he might not GO to Egypt, and if he does go, how does it help to know AFTERWARDS that God was telling him the truth?

That's like proving to you that you're going to read this essay, by having you read the essay. It's circular logic.

There was no doubt at this point that Moses would follow God's instruction. I mean, he did refuse at first, but that wasn't because of a lack of trust.

Moses was experiencing prophecy, and you can be sure that when someone experiences genuine prophecy, it's a very real experience. Add to that, the 3 miraculous magic tricks God provided to him. He was all in. Going, going, gone. That's not what God was trying to show him.

Sometimes we make decisions and we're very confident with the decisions we made. We think the matter through and we weigh both sides, then we decide. We're happy. We're right. Then it starts. The doubt. The questions. It becomes easy to look back and second guess ourselves. "Did I really make the right decision?" "Am I 100% sure?" "What if I messed up?" "Maybe I even did the right thing, but there was something missing in my intention or concentration."

God tells Moses, "You're going to go take the Jews out of Egypt. Once that's done, don't doubt yourself, because you'll see concrete results of the

benefits of what you've done." When you stand on this very mountain, Sinai, and the entire Jewish nation is transformed into prophets, then you'll know for sure that it was all worth it. Not just being free. Not just being a unified nation. Achieving greatness as a nation. That makes it super clear that God 'made the right choice'.

Our lessons from this can be to feel confident in our good choices, and not to regret them or second guess them. If you think a decision through and decide something is right, don't feel bad about it afterward (unless you have very good reason to). Another lesson can be that the best way to prove that something is right is by whether the people involved are better after it goes down. If an action makes you a better person, it was probably the right move. If it messes with who you should be or how you should act, that's something to reconsider.

*continued from page 1*



**IF YOU STACK TWO LASAGNAS, YOU STILL JUST HAVE ONE LASAGNA**

**PICKLE JEWS**



Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question.

Have a question? Please send it in to [stump@nageelawest.org](mailto:stump@nageelawest.org)

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.



## #154 Getting Cheeky

Hi Rabbi,

Last week you wrote about the commandment not to hold a grudge, and also not to take revenge. Is that the same as the concept of 'turning the other cheek?' Is the right thing to do when someone hurts you to let them continue to hurt you? If not, how is that different than holding a grudge? How should I react to bullies?

Thanks,  
Penny U. Shover

**DISCLAIMER:** Every situation is different, and bullying is complicated so I can't give specific advice on how to deal with your specific situation. If you have someone bullying you, please immediately speak to a parent or authority figure you trust to get specific guidance.

Dear P U Shover,

For anyone else reading this, I'll first explain the back-ground of your question. There is a Christian belief, found in their version of the bible that says, "Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." That means, according to this belief that if someone is trying to hurt you, you should allow them to. Not only to not fight back, but to even turn your cheek to them and allow them to hurt you more.

Let's examine this. I'll mention a few quick stories and then you tell me what you think.

Abraham's nephew Lot gets captured so Avraham leads a small army of his servants and single handedly won the war.

Samson the mighty toppled a building of the Philistines, crushing 3,000 soldiers.

King David (yes, the composer of beautiful songs) was known as a war hero, getting

praised for 'defeating thousands.'

These are all instances that are praised in our books of our prophets. There are literally hundreds of other examples I can give of Jews throughout history who have stood up for ourselves, and fought back. Whether it was the Maccabees or partisan resistance fighters, we follow the Talmudic teaching that if someone is coming to kill you, we are obligated to act first! In other words, we do NOT believe in sitting back and allowing people to hurt us. Even if the bully isn't there to actually kill, emotional or physical pain can have devastating effects and needs to be prevented.

One thing important to understand is the difference between self defense and revenge. Here's one way to understand the difference:

Alyssa is visiting a new city on a week-end vacation. While there, a thug pushes her and threatens to beat her up. Should she:

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# Stump the Rabbi; continued

- A. Stay on the ground and ask the mugger to kick her harder
  - B. Run away. She'll never see this guy again (fighting back only if she can't escape).
  - C. Call the police.
  - D. Hire a Mandalorian hit man to take down the city and take revenge on her attacker
- I hope I don't have to provide an answer key. Here's another situation:

Alyssa is walking down the street where she lives. A bully from her school, who bothers her all the time, pushes her and threatens to beat her up. Should she:

- A. Stay on the ground and ask the mugger to kick her harder
- B. Run away.
- C. Find an authority figure who can actually put a stop to it
- D. She's going to get bullied constantly unless she does something, so get up and fight back.

[Please remember to refer to the above disclaimer. This is not meant to give specific advice.]

What I'm getting at is that hitting back during an attack, or to a person who is a consistent threat is not considered revenge. It's not holding a grudge (necessarily- that depends on your attitude). We should defend ourselves. However, in the first case, where Alyssa will never see the guy again, fighting back is unnecessary, if she can escape and/ or contact the police. Forgiveness is a beautiful, grand thing to work on. Let's not confuse it with being a weak pushover.

The Torah calls us a 'stiff necked people'. One of the best qualities of having a stiff neck is that it's really hard to turn your cheek!

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

*the Rabbi*

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BIRTHDAY!**



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I used to have a problem  
with grammatical  
tenses...



...but not yet.

OUCH! GROAN!

Do you have a better joke? I sure hope so!  
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